

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe

Commissioner & Adjutant General

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Alaska National Guard

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By Edward Eagerton

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Alaska Air National Guard commander promoted to brigadier general

Wasilla, Alaska — Brig. Gen. Tracy Smith, assistant adjutant general-Air and commander of the Alaska Air National Guard, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at a ceremony here, April 1. Retired Brig. Gen. Blake Gettys presided over the ceremony.

"It is an incredible honor that I do not take lightly, and I will do my best to do the most for the people I serve while holding this new position and rank," said Smith. "Leadership is about humbly serving while setting the strategic direction, and it's about taking care of those under your charge."

The newly-minted general, who took command of the Alaska Air National Guard in January, began her career as an enlisted Airman 35 years ago in 1986.

"I enlisted as a medical service specialist, working maternity and intensive care," explained Smith.

Smith would later go on to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1994. She then commissioned to second lieutenant that year.

"I met an Air Force Academy graduate that spoke to me about what the academy had to offer," she said. "I then went to the Base Education Office on Andrews Air Force Base to find out how to apply."

And the rest, they say, is history. Her career and various commands would have her developing new Airmen at Basic Training at Lackland Air Force Base, to serving at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

"I truly enjoyed working in Basic Training, revamping the Air Force's physical fitness program, teaching health, nutrition, and customs and courtesies to new Airmen, and creating a master fitness program for the military training instructors," she explained. "I also enjoyed and learned so much about myself while serving in command at various levels."

At her ceremony, Smith expressed that she herself did not see her path leading to this point, were it not for the insight and mentorship of others she served with.

"My career has been built on people before me who didn't look like me lending a hand, opening a door,

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and seeing something in me that I may not have seen yet,” she explained, “and there are many to thank.”

Speaking about the Alaska Air National Guard now under her command, Smith said that she felt like the luckiest commander in the Air National Guard.

“I am truly humbled by the people and the missions that are the Alaska Air National Guard,” said Smith. “In my very short time here, I can attest that our agile, innovative, and ready team of Guardsmen have got you covered, from the most remote and austere locations in Alaska with the rescue triad, all the way up to space with team Clear and the Air Defense Squadron watching the skies and keeping us safe.

“When you really sit and think about all of the diverse mission sets and all of the multitudes of support and maintenance personnel that are true arctic experts operating in the most severe conditions, it is just incredible,” she said.

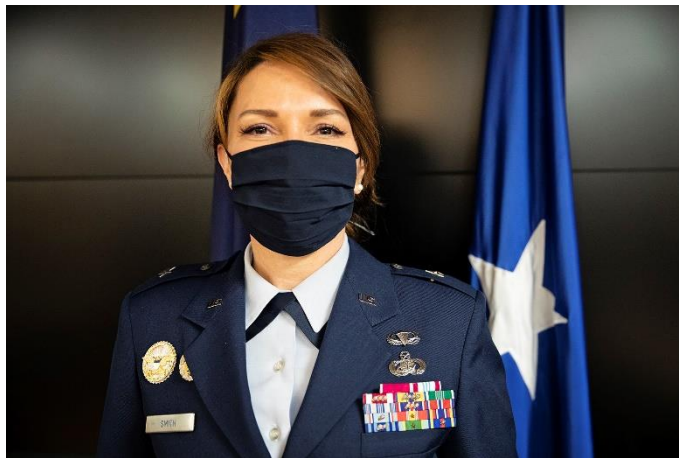
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Photos

1. **Attached pdf** includes story and a low-resolution photo for viewing on screen.

2. **Web link** includes story and full-resolution photo. (Accessible from military computers.)

<https://ak.ng.mil/Media/News/Article/2569478/alaska-air-national-guard-commander-promoted-to-brigadier-general/>



Brig. Gen. Tracy Smith, assistant adjutant general-Air and commander of the Alaska Air National Guard, after she was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at a ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, April 1, 2021. Smith took command of the Alaska Air National Guard in January. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Edward Eagerton)